UGC Grants to Universities

*457. DR. P.C. ALEXANDER: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) the total amount of grants given by University Grants Comission to Central Universities and their affiliated colleges for Plan and Non-Plan expenditure, for the year 2001-2002 and the corresponding figures of grants given to all the Universities in Maharashtra and the colleges affiliated to these universities, during this period; and

(b) whether Government would direct the UGC to adopt a more equitable formula for grants to all universities, whether Central or State, taking into account the fact that the State Universities are starved of funds because of serious financial crisis experienced by State Governments?

THE MINISTER OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (DR. MURLI MANOHAR JOSHI): (a) According to the information furnished by the University Grants Commission (UGC), the total amount of grant under Plan and Non-Plan given to Central Universities and their affiliated colleges during 2001-02 was Rs. 970.63 crores and the grant given to the universities and affiliated Colleges in Maharashtra under Plan and Non-Plan during this period was Rs. 53.98 crores.

(b) State Universities are established under State Acts and their maintenance expenditure is met by the State Governments. Similarly, the responsibility of meeting the maintenance expenditure of colleges of State Universities rests with the agencies concerned with establishment and running of such colleges. The UGC is providing Non-Plan grants to the Central Universities to meet their maintenance expenditure as Central Universities are established under Central Acts and the responsibility for meeting their maintenance expenditure rests exclusively with the Central Government. Besides, some Deemed Universities and some of the colleges of Delhi University and Banaras Hindu University also receive maintenance grants from UGC.

Accordingly, share of the Central Universities, Deemed Universities and colleges of Central Universities is predominently high out of the total Non-Plan grants released by UGC. However, State Universities also receives small Non-Plan grants from UGC for specific purposes.

The UGC provides plan grants to all eligible Central and State Universities and affiliated colleges under its plan schemes as per the prescribed norms and subject to the availability of resources. The plan proposals received from all the eligible universities and colleges are examined by the experts, nominated by UGC for deciding the quantum of plan assistance to various grantees under the UGC schemes. As the existing system is working satisfactorily, there is no need to direct the UGC to modify the existing formula for providing grants to the universities.

Speed of Howrah-Delhi Rajdhani

†*458. SHRI DEVDAS APTE: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether any instructions have been issued by the Ministry of Railways, to slow down the speed of Howrah-Delhi Rajdhani Express, between Dhanbad and Mughalsarai; and

(b) if so, whether the Ministry has announced its information?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI NITISH KUMAR): (a) and (b) A temporary speed restriction of 75 km/h has been imposed on Dhanbad, Mughalsarai and Danapur Divisions of East Central Railway and Madhupur-Jhajha section of Eastern Railway during night time as a precautionary measure on security considerations. This has resulted temporarily in the partial slowing down and resultant late running of the Howrah-New Delhi Rajdhani Expresses. In case the temporary speed restriction is extended further for a significant period, the schedule of Howrah-New Delhi Rajdhani Express will be revised and the public notified.

Air pollution

*459. SHRI R. SHUNMUGASUNDARAM: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that pollution level in the air in our country went up by 50 per cent in the last decade, as found by the Department of Space, Thiruvananthapuram, which has been monitoring the aerosol levels; and

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†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.